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11/28/1988 - Area Student With Marching Panthers

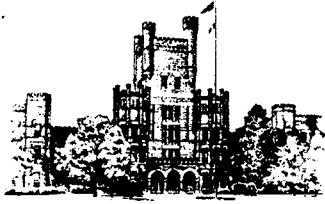
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AREA STUDENT WITH "MARCHING PANTHERS"

CHARLESTON, IL--Jeffery Alt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stan Alt of Loda, is a proud member of Eastern Illinois University's Panther Marching Band. The sophomore Physical Education major plays trumpet for the band. He is treasurer of Kappa Kappa Psi national band fraternity.

There are 150 Eastern students who devote at least 8 hours a week of their time to bring music and spirit to Eastern's football games, as well as other sporting events and campus activities. Members rehearse their drills three times a week and have a music rehearsal one night a week. Band Director Tom Brawner said he's proud of their hard work to bring entertainment and excitement to Eastern.

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"We take a lot of pride in what we do. Students get satisfaction of being a team member in a project that offers a lot of challenge," he said.

Brawner said Eastern's program is different from other band programs because they perform a different half-time show every football game instead of the same show every week. "This takes a great deal of effort, but results in a show that we have a great deal of pride in."

The band members also have to memorize their music and do not use published music, only arranged. Brawner said he writes about a third of what they use. Al Horney, head of Eastern's Jazz Studies, writes a third, and Brawner receives a third from various sources.

"By using arranged music, the band gets a more distinctive and authentic sound. This is more educational and entertaining, and is a challenge for students to perform different music and drills each week," he said.

The band doesn't just perform on Eastern's field. They have also played for the Opening Day Game for the Chicago Bears Football Team at Chicago's Soldier Field.

"This is a challenge for us. It makes us work hard because we perform in front of 65,000 people," said Brawner.

Eastern's Marching Band also hosts an annual high school band competition, coordinated by associate band director Richard Barta. All the members help with the competition which involves 28 area high school bands and give a performance at the end of the competition.

During a special concert this month in Eastern's Dvorak Concert Hall, the band received a standing ovation from a large crowd of admirers.

Eastern's band program gives students an opportunity to continue their music education they began in high school.